

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 1178

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 6343

FOR EAGLEBURGER FROM SEELYE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AEMR, APER, US, LE

SUBJECT: EMBASSY STAFFING

REF: STATE 176925

1. I FEEL STRONGLY THAT WE MUST ADD TWO MORE PEOPLE TO STAFFING PATTERN PROPOSED IN REFTTEL. COMMUNICATIONS WORKLOAD, INCLUDING MAINTENANCE OF EQUIPMENT AND REQUIREMENTS FOR LONG PERIODS OF MONITORING, MAKE IT ESSENTIAL THAT WE ADD C&R OFFICER TO TWO TCU PERSONNEL. PRESENCE OF FOUR SUBSTANTIVE OFFICERS, PLUS TWO OTHER OFFICERS WHO WILL INITIATE TRAFFIC, ALSO NECESSITATES RETENTION OF SECRETARY. FURTHERMORE, IN ABSENCE OF TELEPHONES, WE MAKE APPOINTMENTS AND SEND MESSAGES BY HAND-DELIVERED LETTER. THESE CANNOT BE TYPED BY LOCAL PERSONNEL. THEREFORE, I URGE THAT YOU RECONSIDER. FOLLOWING IS DETAILED JUSTIFICATION.

2. COMMUNICATIONS - THEORETICALLY YOU WOULD EXPECT THAT THE COMMUNICATIONS WORKLOAD WOULD DROP OFF WITH THE REDUCED STAFFING. HOWEVER, IN THE PAST, AS STAFF REDUCTIONS WERE MADE, THE COMMUNICATIONS VOLUME HAS REMAINED AS HIGH AS BEFORE. WHILE IN CASE OF THIS DRASTIC CUT IN STAFF, WE WOULD EXPECT A CERTAIN REDUCTION IN COMMUNICATIONS WORKLOAD, IT WILL CERTAINLY NOT RPT NOT BE PROPORTIONATE TO SIZE OF STAFF CUT. OF EQUAL IMPORTANCE IN ADEQUATELY MANNING OUR COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES, THE DEPARTMENT REALIZE THAT:

A. WHEN OPERATING ON EMBASSY GENERATORS, IT IS NECESSARY

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FOR TCU PERSONNEL TO MONITOR THE CW CHANNEL ON A 24-HOUR

BASIS TO BE ABLE RESPOND TO FLASH OR NIACT IMMEDIATE MESSAGES.

B. TCU PERSONNEL DO NOT NOW PUNCH TAPES FOR STATE MESSAGES AND THEY ARE UNFAMILIAR WITH THE STATE ADDRESSING AND NUMBERING SYSTEM. TWO OVERWORKED TCU COMMUNICATORS WOULD HAVE DIFFICULTY IN UNDERTAKING THIS ADDED WORKLOAD AND IN EFFICIENTLY HANDLING THE STATE COMMUNICATIONS PROCEDURES.

C. THERE IS A CONSTANT PROBLEM OF KEEPING EQUIPMENT FUNCTIONING PROPERLY. YESTERDAY ONE TCU OFFICER SPENT THE ENTIRE DAY REPAIRING A COMMUNICATIONS CHANNEL WHICH WAS OUT OF ORDER.

D. THE EMBASSY HAS A NEW WIRE ROOM FOR HANDLING UNCLASSIFIED TRAFFIC. IT HAS BEEN IN OPERATION FOR 3 WEEKS AND THE STAFF IS NOT YET ADEQUATELY TRAINED AND REQUIRES CONSTANT SUPERVISION.

3. SECRETARY - IN OUR VIEW, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE RETAIN AT LEAST ONE SECRETARY. HANDING OUR TRAFFIC TO COMMUNICATIONS IN HANDWRITTEN DRAFT ADDS FURTHER TO THE COMMUNICATIONS WORKLOAD. WITH SIX OFFICERS AT THE POST WORKING ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY WITH CLASSIFIED HIGH-PRECEDENT TRAFFIC, IT IS UNREALISTIC TO EXPECT THAT POST WILL BE ABLE TO FUNCTION WITHOUT AT LEAST ONE SECRETARY. WITH VERY LIMITED TELEPHONE SERVICE, AND FOR REASONS OF SECURITY, WE UTILIZE LETTERS FOR MAKING APPOINTMENTS AND CONDUCTING OTHER ROUTINE EMBASSY BUSINESS. LOCAL SECRETARIES CANNOT HANDLE THIS CORRESPONDENCE. IN OUR OPINION, IT IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL TO KEEP ONE SECRETARY IF THE EMBASSY IS GOING TO BE ABLE TO EFFECTIVELY CONDUCT EVEN THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF OUR WORK HERE.

4. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT YOU AUTHORIZE THESE TWO ADDITIONAL SLOTS, MAKING MISSION STAFF 14 RATHER THAN 12.
SEELYE

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